

# PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN

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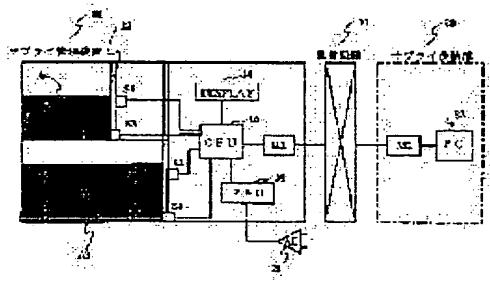
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#### (54) SUPPLY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

(57) Abstract:

**PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED:** To provide a supply management system which automatically orders a supply and delivers the supply before it runs out irrespective of the presence or absence of the communication function of an image forming device itself or even if a user does not manage the stock of the supply and does not execute an ordering job by managing the supply in a supply management device.

**SOLUTION:** When the supply reaches a supplement area from a stock state, a supply supplement area detection sensor 1 is turned off and it transmits a supply supplement signal to CPU 16. CPU 16 transmits order data of the supply to a supply part 80 through a communication line 30 when the supply supplement signal from the supply supplement area detection sensor S1. is detected for not less than prescribed detection time which is set by a user. Thus, the supply part accordingly delivers the supply to a user side and transmits delivery data through the communication line.



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Japanese Publication for Unexamined Patent Application

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(A) Relevance to claim

This document has relevance to claims 1 to 29 of the present application.

(B) Translation of the Relevant Passages of the Document

[PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED]

[0004]

The first object of the present invention is to provide a supply management system which realizes the following advantage. A supply management apparatus manages a supply, so that automatic order for the supply and delivery of the supply are realized before the supply runs out, irrespective of the presence or absence of a communication function, or even though a user does not manage the stock of the supply and does not execute an ordering job for the supply.

[0005]

[MEANS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS]

In the invention recited in claim 1, the first object is achieved by the following arrangement. A supply management system includes: a supply management apparatus for storing a supply, which is one of various consumables used in an image forming apparatus, on a

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side of a user; and a supplying section, connected to the supply management apparatus via a communication line, which provides the supply as one of the various consumables, to the user having the image forming apparatus, wherein the supply management apparatus has: detecting means for detecting a storage amount of the supply in the supply management apparatus; and a transmitting means for transmitting order data for the supply from the supply management apparatus via the communication line to the supplying section when the detecting means detects that the storage amount of the supply in the supply management apparatus becomes less than a predetermined amount, and the supplying section has: receiving means for receiving the order data for the supply which has been transmitted from the transmitting section; delivery means for delivering the supply from the supplying section to the side of the user in accordance with the order data when the receiving means receives the order data; and delivery date transmitting means for transmitting delivery date data delivered from the delivery means via the communication line.

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